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Tinker, Sailor,

By Michael Ledeen



Stansfield Turner, critics say, has
demoralized and politicized the CIA.

IN HIS STATE OF THE UNION address, President Carter called for the end of unwarranted restrictions on American intelligence agencies. "An effective intelligence capability," he said, "is vital to our nation's security." Although the remark drew an ovation, there have been no dramatic initiatives from the Carter administration to revitalize what is generally considered to be a demoralized and often dangerously ineffective American intelligence community. Yet the president's words demonstrate that the mood of the administration—and with it, by all indications, that of the country—has changed dramatically from the time when the Central Intelligence Agency was considered to be a "rogue elephant" dangerously out of control.

What is required to realize the president's goals? According to those who have spent their lives in and around the intelligence business, the primary requirement is a change in the domestic attitude toward the CIA. Such persons—including former directors and top officials of the agency—say the CIA must be freed from some of the more exaggerated forms of congressional scrutiny, such as the Hughes-Ryan Amendment, which gives more than 200 senators and staff members access to agency data. They also urge that those members of government and the media who have harassed the intelligence community for the past half decade must now recognize that a viable intelligence agency is urgently needed. And, they say, the agency and the intelligence community as a whole badly need the finest possible leadership, both from the White House and from the office of the director of central intelligence (DCI). That post is currently occupied by Admiral Stansfield Turner, and in the view of an impressive number of intelligence experts, Admiral Turner is not able to lead the CIA back to respectability.

WITHIN MONTHS OF HIS 1977 appointment as DCI, Stansfield Turner had acquired the nickname "Captain Queeg" in CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia.

One morning in January 1979, he came to work to find the bulletin boards and mailboxes full of a forged edition of his own "Notes From the Director." Dated January 15, it has become an underground classic in the intelligence community:

I was in my office fairly exhausted last evening after stopping work at 10 P.M. As is my wont after a long day, I asked the
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